

Shall Winnetka Have Its Own Motion Picture House?

If given an opportunity to vote whether or not a commercial movie should become a part of Winnetka life, my answer would be negative.

The chief objection to the movies, as has been pointed out many times, is the harmful effect upon children, physically, mentally, morally. Physically, by eye-strain, fatigue from late hours, overstimulation; mentally, by dulling the imagination and the creative powers; morally, by introducing to their sensitive natures problems far beyond their years. To say that most of these ideas "pass over their heads" is to blind one's self to the truth. The impress is made far oftener than we know. Psychologists and neurologists are more and more tracing certain mental ailments to "suggestions made in early childhood". What a harvest the movie must be sowing for the nerve specialists of the next generation!

One often marvels at the imaginative genius of the producer of a movie play. But he is a rarity compared with the thousands who witness the play, and accept it, lazily, as recreation, their own imagination being dulled in the process. A little girl said impulsively, after seeing "Little Women", (a good film, too) "Oh, I wish I hadn't seen it. It isn't at all like I thought it was." I could sympathize with her, for at one fell swoop, it had robbed me of precious, almost sacred, pictures of memory.

This harmful phase is bound to reflect upon adults as well as children. To operate a movie here successfully, necessitates "fans", and no mind can become gorged with picture plays night after night without the imagination being dulled. A dull imagination means a poorer grade of work everywhere—arts, professions, trades.

To say no to this question and suggest no positive constructive substitute would be productive of more harm than good. I believe a constructive plan would not be so hard

to formulate as at first might be imagined. Already the pendulum is swinging back a little. Mantell's Shakespeare in November drew crowded houses. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra is at a loss to know how to serve the throngs of children that come to the children's concerts. They even make the suggestion that they would be glad to accommodate groups in outlying districts, if arrangements could be made, charging an admission of ten cents for the mere purpose of aiding in making the child more appreciative of what he is getting. W. L. Hubbard, musical critic of the Chicago Tribune, writes, December 7, in addition to the above..

"In countless schools in the country especially in the west, worth while courses of musical entertainments and lectures are arranged for pupils and a charge of 10 cents—the regular movie charge—is made. The pupils flock to such entertainments."

Similar educative plans could be carried out in respect to the drama. The dramatic instinct is universal, and it is deplorable that our children are being served with such low standard of drama as they see, for the most part, in the movie play—exaggeration in every way, with the truthful as well as artistic sense neglected. More education in art, both dramatic and pictorial, would tend to counteract the immense popularity which the movie now holds.

Of course, the movie is an institution that is here to stay. My only plea is that we teach our children to consider it with judgment and moder-

ation; and that we aim in a constructive way to counteract its harmful effects, and the low standard of

art which it maintains. This will be a much easier task for us in Winnetka, if we have no commercial movie,

with the attending temptation and opportunity to go too often.
—Lora T. Dickinson.

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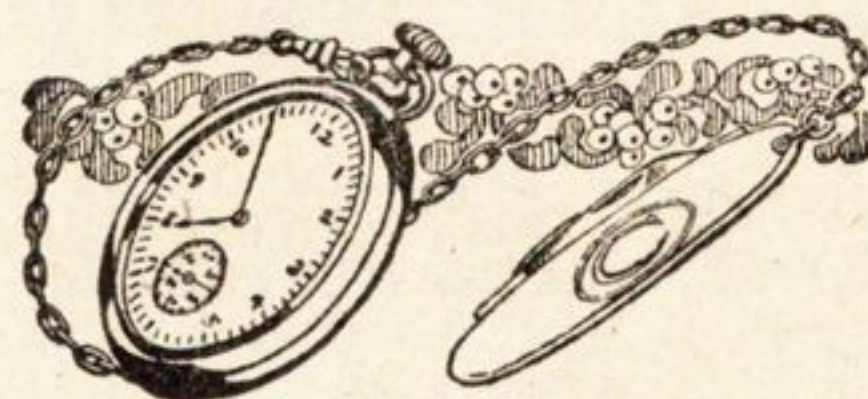
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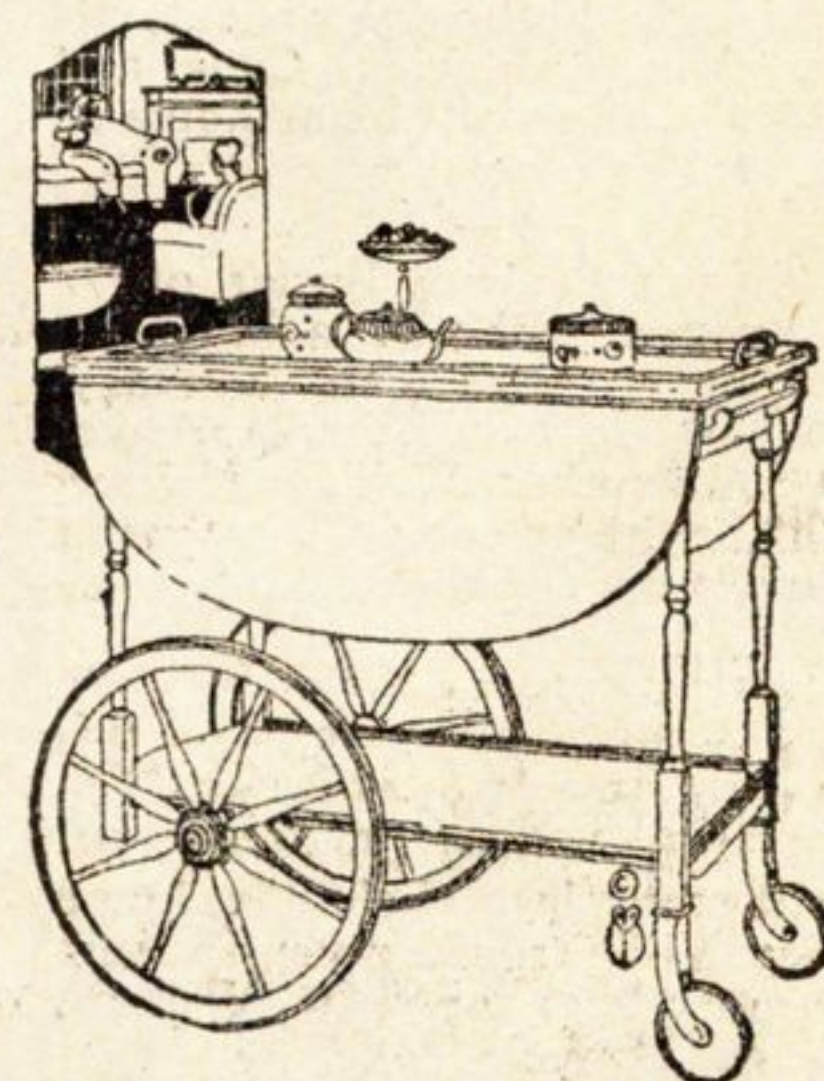
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